

XXII.—*Appendix to List of Birds observed in the Islands of Malta and Gozo**. By CHARLES A. WRIGHT.

To my previous list I have two new species to add, namely:—

LANIUS COLLURIO. (Red-backed Shrike.)

Some years ago, I purchased in the Malta market a bird which appeared to be a female (young) of this species. This was in the autumn. The specimen was in a too advanced state of decomposition to be preserved; and not being quite certain of the species, I did not feel justified at the time in admitting it into the list. Since then I have seen an undoubted example, which had been killed in Malta, in the collection of Signor Schembri, who had obtained it after the publication of his Catalogue in 1843. This bird may therefore be considered as an accidental visitant. It is very common in autumn in the neighbourhood of Athens, whence I have received specimens.

FULIGULA MERSA. (White-headed Duck.)

A specimen of this interesting Duck came into my possession in January last, soon after the issue of the first part of this list. It was a female, and was shot during the extraordinarily bad weather which prevailed about the middle of the month. I have never heard of its having been met with here before. At the same time a good many Ducks of various kinds, and Teal, were driven on the island by the severity of the weather; and amongst them a number of *Mergus albellus* (an exceedingly rare bird in Malta), of which I obtained an adult female and several young birds, also females. Male Smews seem to be universally scarce. The White-headed Duck may be readily distinguished from other Ducks by its shining, Grebe-like breast, very short wings, and stiff, almost Cormorant-like tail. Its gibbous bill, which is especially observable in the male, is also a remarkable feature. As it is said to be common in some parts of the northern coast of Africa†, as well as Sicily and Corfu, it is curious that we do not oftener have it here.

Besides these novelties, I have registered the following occur-

* See *anteà*, p. 137.

† It is common on the lagoon of El Baheira, near Tunis.—ED.

rences of rare and accidental visitors in my note-book since my list went to press :—

Strix otus.—A third specimen of this common European Owl, but which appears to be only an accidental visitor to Malta, was taken on the 17th December last, and is now in my possession.

Passer petronia.—Another example of this species, which, I am informed, is very common in Naples, where it is taken in nets in great numbers, and migrates in spring and autumn, was captured alive in February this year (1864), and is in the possession of Dr. Gulia.

Emberiza cirrus.—I obtained another example, taken alive in 1863.

Hirundo rupestris.—This Swallow appears to be less given to roaming than any of its congeners, and it has even been doubted whether it is a migrant at all. It may perhaps be for this reason that we seldom see it here, whilst the other species, *H. rustica* and *H. urbica*, are plentiful during the migratory seasons. My first acquaintance with *H. rupestris* in these islands was in December last, when spending a day in Gozo. There were several of them flying over the town and along the fronts of the houses in the streets, and round the ditch of the old fortifications, which is used as a fruit- and vegetable-garden. The day was cold, but clear. On revisiting the island about a month afterwards, on the 26th January, I again met with them the first thing on landing. On neither occasion was any other species to be seen, nor do any of the Swallows or Swifts generally winter here. Again, at the interval of about another month (on the 20th of February), I observed a specimen in the Malta market. All this serves to prove the sedentary tendency of the *H. rupestris*; but that it does sometimes migrate there can be no doubt.

XXIII.—On the Birds of the Comoro Islands.

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(Plate VII.)

THE Comoros are a group of four islands lying in the northern part of the Mozambique Channel, between Madagascar and the